Toward an exploration of follower's implicit followership theories of Mashhad's large organizations using a qualitative approach

Zahra Mohamadzadeh[1]*, Saeed Mortazavi[2], Mohammad Lagzian[2], Fariborz Rahimnia[2]

1. Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Binaloud Higher Education Institute, Mashhad, Iran
2. Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Abstract

Followership is a developing paradigm in organizational behavior which focuses mainly on followers. The goal of this study is to explore follower's implicit followership theories (IFTs) which entail an analysis of follower's views and perception about followership. For this purpose, based on a phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews with employees of large public and private organizations, in Mashhad were analyzed by exploratory content analysis. A total of 25 categories of implicit theories were detected in 5 prototypes and 5 anti-prototypes. Followership prototypes consist of constructive perception of work, job competencies, mighty arm of leader, moral virtues and initiation pattern; five anti-prototypes were named as role deviances including destructive behaviors, obedience, incompetency, indifference and blue color. Reflecting on the findings, a 5 dimensional model was identified, with each dimension having its prototypes and anti- prototypes. Results showed that follower's IFTs differ from leader's follower's implicit followership theories.

Keywords

* **Corresponding Author, Email:** zmohamadzadeh@yahoo.com

Introduction

Managers in successful organizations should respond to global developed markets. Competition has imposed requirements on managers to innovate and manage their operations more productively. Existing paradigms of organizational structure and organizational design are failing (Favara, 2009) and requires adaptation to new trends that have led organizations to the distribution of power, and organizations are better managed through leadership than traditional hierarchy of management. On the other hand, increasing expertise, reduced management levels and flatter organizations, approaching innovative organizations to informal relationships, revealing the misconducts of leaders all have led to declining power distance between leaders and followers and more attention on followership.

Organizations need a better understanding of followership role, because the new leadership paradigm requires a higher level of interdependence between leaders and followers (Favara, 2009). According to Kelley (1992, p.20) the influence of a leader on an organization's success is only 10 to 20%, while followers makeup the rest 80 to 90%. Everyone in an organization is somewhat a leader and a follower. Disregarding the followership will mean we have ignored the basis of "social construction of leadership-followership"(Thody, 2000). Individuals' assumptions about the traits and behaviors that characterize followers, known as IFTs (Sy, 2010), have significant effects on their performance and establish their behaviors and expectations.

Although IFTs have been recently addressed, information processing and socio-cognitive approaches to leadership and followership including implicit theories have not been at the forefront of leadership studies for over 30 years (Epitropaki *et al.*, 2013).

Yukl & Falbe (1990) have provided some techniques for upward influence which targets followers, but these techniques do not completely elaborate followers roles, in addition, it is not clear what characteristics a good or a bad follower has. Accordingly, this current study tries to find out "how do subordinates see their roles as

followers and what are the prototypes and anti-prototypes of followership from the follower's view?" This implies that their IFTs have to be studied. The answers to these questions are essential for understanding of leadership process and can be a reliable basis for categorizing followers and making better followers. Scholars know that implicit theories of both leaders and followers have important personal and organizational outcomes such as LMX, transformational leadership, job attitudes and performance (Epitropaki *et al.*, 2013). Regarding that, researchers believe that match between leadership and followership styles can improve working conditions (Gils *et al.*, 2010), understanding followership styles seems useful and even necessary.

Although recently, there has been growing attention to followership (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman, 2011), this does not mean the adequacy of studies. Recent studies have emphasized the need for more attention on dimensions, behaviors, characteristics and the roles of followers (Agho, 2009; Bligh & Schyns, 2007; Sy, 2010).

Theoretical background

There are two possible ways to define followership. In the first definition, followership is seen as "subordination", thus it's an organizational position. Here, the leader is the manager and subordinates are the followers of the organizational leaders, or managers. Stech (2008, 41-52) refers to a paradigm of followership in which leadership and followership are two organizational positions. He stated that it is a common practice to refer to the superior as a leader and the subordinate as a follower. In the second definition, "a follower" is someone who knows himself as a follower of a leader, regardless of his position, a manager or not, this relationship between leaders and followers may occur outside the organizational role and the leader may be someone outside the organizational hierarchy. Since this research studied followership in organizational context, the researchers adopted the first definition.

Followership Implicit theories

"Implicit theories" are the term used to describe the group of cognitive constructs that embody a person's informal beliefs about typical characteristics in people or objects (Epitropaki *et al.*, 2013). The roots of implicit theories are in cognitive schemas, which include "the attributes, images, feelings, and ideas associated with a particular category of an individual" (Goodwin *et al.*, 2000, p.770). DeVries and VanGelder (2005, as cited in Bligh & Schyns, 2007) first introduced IFTs that can be related to "Romance of leadership"(Meindle, 1995). Followers and leader's perceptions and attributions about the role of followership are known as IFTs. IFTs are patterns that remain in followers' minds and help them to evaluate and judge their behavior, respond to others and shape follower's expectations from their roles. These theories form interpretations and perceptions of followers. Based on Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2014) categorization, this research is a "Role- Based followership" study, since it considers leaders as recipient of follower influence in producing outcomes.

At the center of implicit theories are "prototypes" (McShane & VonGlinow, 2010, p. 375). Prototypes are defined as abstract composites of the most representative member or the most commonly shared attributes of a particular category (Lord *et al.*,1982; Rosch,1978 as cited in Sy, 2010) or as stated by McShane and VonGlinow (2010, p.375) it refers to the preconceived beliefs about the features and behaviors of an effective follower.

Followership typologies

The effort applied in the typology of followers or in recognizing their characteristics or behaviors were mainly concerned with theory and have not been confirmed empirically (Ekundayo, 2011). Steger *et al.* (1982), Kelly (1992), and Kellerman (2008) presented some of these typologies. Thody (2003) also reviews some of the positive or negative roles of followers. Since all these followership typologies had purely theoretical basis and were not derived from follower's real perspectives, some studies tried to reach a typology based on real perspectives of leaders or followers.

Agho (2009) compared leader's views about the ideal characteristics of good leaders and followers from a number of given characteristics and found that most of the characteristics associated with effective leaders were perceived to be different from those associated with effective followers. Sy (2010) measured leader's IFTs. He found 6 categories of implicit theories including Industry, Enthusiasm and Good Citizen as prototypes; and Conformity, Insubordination, and Incompetence as anti-prototypes. Although Sy (2010) developed a typology for IFTs, his work was based on leader's point of views not follower's perspectives about themselves. Carsten *et al.* (2010) studied followers from their own point of view and tried to explore social construction of followership. A number of followership patterns emerged including team player, positive attitude, proactive behavior, expressing opinion, obedience/deference, flexibility/openness, communication skills, support, responsible/dependable, taking ownership, mission conscience and integrity. Hence, they did not also develop a typology of IFT followers.

As mentioned earlier, studies that have investigated followership, focused on social construction of followership or on leader's view about followers, *i.e.* leader's IFTs. So, existing prototypes and anti-prototypes of followership have always been stated from leaders' points of view. But the question still remains, "how do followers see their roles and what are the positive and negative characteristics of followership role, based on their own views?" So, this study explored follower's attitudes toward their roles and tried to develop a typology of IFTs; the findings are necessary for personal and organizational outcomes like job attitudes and performances, understanding LMX and matching leaders and followers styles, categorizing followers and developing followership theory (Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014). It was conducted in an Iranian work environment which also has differences with former studied contexts. This can improve the generalizability of IFTs in different contexts.

Methods and Materials

To attain followers' attitudes about their roles, a qualitative approach was adopted. This approach is appropriate for theory building and allows major themes to emerge from the data (Carsten *et al.*, 2010). This study belongs to social construction tradition in which individuals create and interpret reality as they interact with the environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Weick (1993) believes that social constructions in organizations are explained by interaction between social schema that drive perceptions and information processing. In leadership, specifically, Bresnen (1995), meindl (1995) and Carsten *et al.* (2010) refer to social construction of leadership and followership. Cresswell (2009, p.30) identifies five different qualitative research methods. Since this study explored the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon (followership), the research method is "phenomenology" that fits with the purpose of the study. Phenomenology studies do not have any explicit theoretical orientation and the researcher attempted to build themes from participant's views (Cresswell, 2009, p.72).

The population consists of personnel working in large private and public organizations of various industries in Mashhad with more than 200 subordinates. Large organizations were chosen for two reasons. First, researchers could not gain access to all private and public organizations due to inaccurate statistics. Instead, large organizations were better attainable. Second, Yukl (2003) confirms that Leadership in Organizations has a specific focus on managerial leadership in large organizations. Based on two available lists of 120 private and 80 public organization in Mashhad, stratified sampling method based on main categories of ISIC-2008 was used to select organizations. In each main category of ISIC, one large organization was selected. When entering each organization, purposive sampling was used to find the person who best fits the research purpose. Like Carsten *et al.* (2010), respondents with the following features were selected to be sure of their relationship with their managers: at least one year experience with current manager, at least five years of experience in

the organization, working at least one hour interacting with him. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 employees of 6 public and 8 employees of 6 private organizations in proportion with total number of organizations (each employee from a different organization) until researchers reached theoretical saturation, where researchers did not find any new point in responses. Employees from different organizational levels, education, and expertise from various industries were drawn, so as to give a broader scope so that more comprehensive views about the issue can be achieved as much as possible. In other words, since the research explored follower's implicit followership overall not in special groups, diversity in respondents assured researchers that they have reached as different experiences and attitudes as possible.

Interviews lasted between 30-80 min. The sample consisted of 12 men and 2 women with mean age of 34/35 years (SD=6.91) and the average tenure of 14.64 years (SD=6.67). Sample covered industries including construction, petrochemical, banking, healthcare, publishing, porcelain, electronics manufacturing, food processing, energy, management consulting, religious organization and 2 public services.

Based on the purpose of this study and with help from Carsten *et al.* (2010), semi structured interviews with 10 questions which were developed on followers' jobs and status and their relationship with leaders was used to help followers to explain different aspects of their roles and to reach both comprehensive and deep attitudes of respondents. All but four of the interviews were recorded, the four not recorded was because the respondents requested not to be recorded.

Although the issue of validity has been controversial in qualitative studies, some suggestions have been presented to increase the validity of findings. In this study, researchers used peer debriefing and self-monitoring methods to increase validity (Andreas, 2003). Selecting respondents with various experiences, accurate choice of codes and use of 3 independent raters helped to enhance the validity of the study (Roberts, 2006).

Analysis of the data received from interviews was conducted using

content analysis. It is a technique for analyzing the content of text. The content refers to words, meanings, symbols, themes or any other message (Newman, 2007; p.227). Content analysis is in two general approachs: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis (Insc, Moore & Murphy, 1997). In the present study, qualitative content analysis has been applied because researchers sought to explore and extract the meanings from existing data, not the determination of the quantity of existing concepts. In fact, no theory was available to determine a primary categorization.

Qualitative content analysis starts with deep and careful readings of the text to discover less obvious or hidden contents, when analyzing qualitative data such as handwritten interviews, the analysts creates "codes". The result of a Content analysis can be shown as "classes", they reveal a larger discourse. Identification of the contents of categories is an iterative process, so, the more and more the researcher analyze the text, the more he spends his time to review the categories already identified and to merge or divide them or to resolve contradictions (Given, 2008, p.120).

After conducting interviews, the researchers began to code them. Phrases containing themes were taken. Then, with the elimination of similar and synonymous terms, the numbers of themes reduced notably. After thorough reading of the text, some codes and classes were emerged.

Results

Using content analysis, 25 codes were identified, 21 of them were positive, and were categorized in five major prototype classes. Five classes of anti-prototypes were also identified. This classification is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. identified Classes and codes

	Classes	Codes	Frequencies
Prototypes	Constructive perception of work	Immediate relation with the work	52
		Wide working area	15
		Expert	70
		Team member	23

Continue Table 1. identified Classes and codes

Classes	Codes	Frequencies
	Creativity	19
	Acceptance of poor working conditions	42
	Productivity at Work	75
Job competencies	Punctuality/ timeliness	10
	Rule of Law	6
	Supporting the leader	38
Mighty arm of leader	Source of Information	9
	Consultant	20
	Human skills and social relationships	63
Moral virtues	Integrity	19
	Morality	15
	Pioneering	50
	Intellectual independence	36
Initiation	Sense of ownership and beneficiary	36
	Responsibility	26
	Personal excellence	23
	Destructive behaviors	84
	Obedience	23
Anti-prototypes	Role deviances	Incompetency	36
	Indifference	10
	Blue color	43

Prototypes of followership

Class 1. Constructive perception of work

Constructive perception of work presents follower's perceptions toward his job and involves "immediate relation with work", "wide work area", "expert", and "acceptance of poor working conditions", "team member and creativity".

Respondents referred to facts such as feeling the work with all senses, seeing the details that managers cannot which gives them the ability to be aware of some problems sooner than them, being closer to the work which increases their sensitivity and provides a ground for their creativity, these were categorized as "immediate relation with work". This means that, from the followers' point of view, work gets really done by them. This is probably the most fundamental feature of

followers that underlie other traits. In the literature, managers are encouraged to have a strategic view (Hewes, 2014). But this comprehensive view will only be completed along with pragmatic view of the employees.

The second code was that employees think they have an extensive work area. As respondents stated, they often need to be equipped with different skills so that they can do their own and even their colleagues jobs (temporarily). This feature can be interpreted as "holographic effect". Each employee must be able to do the work of others in the model of the learning organization (Johannessen, 1991).

The third code was labeled "expert". Here, respondents referred to having skills like managers including the ability to detect important problems at workplace, advising manager and analyzing issues. In light of these characteristics, they are prepared to be potential managers in the future.

The fourth code is their duty as a team member. Working in the shifts of colleagues, team playing and trying to have synergy in the team, all are required for followers. Carsten *et al.* (2010) also detected "team player" as one of the main roles of followers. Sy (2010) in "good citizen" named team member as a characteristics of follower's roles. An approach to followership as a changing role, points that followers are essentially team member who should have relative capabilities (Howell & Mendez, 2008, p.33).

The fifth code relating to "perception of work" is creativity. As followers stated, since they have immediate relationships with their work, they can solve some problems with their creativity and promote the work by innovations. They are closer to the job and more given to it, hence can make innovative changes to better the organization's lot. Another aspect of their attitudes to their job is the sixth code labeled as "acceptance of poor working conditions". This code was among complaints of most respondents. Followers graciously accept their hardworking conditions and are even ready to pay personal costs for job. They admit that requirements of the role affect their personal life, but they accept it too. Their lower prestige, less financial benefits, lack of communication with senior managers and slower growth are among

their usual complaints, but they accept them. Thody (2000) believes that critical value of followership is the belief that "it is important to be a good follower". Followers need to believe that they are as valuable as managers, this can enhances their self-esteem. According to his view, only few employees can reach the top echelons of organizations, so, self-worth and self-esteem are critical for followers who are in other roles.

Class 2. Job competencies

The second class involves "job competencies" with three codes:"productivity at work", "timeliness" and "rule of law". This class refers to professional competencies by which they can do their job with high effectiveness.

All skills related to work, such as conscientiousness, skills and expertise, compliance orders, updating job knowledge and efficiency are subject to the label "productivity at work". This finding relates the most with implicit performance theories (Engle & Lord, 1997). One emerging patterns in Sy (2010) study is also "hard working". Howell and Mendez (2008, p.28) also consider knowledge and competencies in performing the job duties among the followership behaviors in "interaction approach".

"Timeliness" is the second code involving respecting deadlines, finishing works on time and ability to schedule works. This code has not been detected in previous studies. A possible reason for this is that in those contexts, timeliness is assumed or taken for granted; but in Iran, it is considered as job requirement.

The third code is the rule of law that contains being aware of organizational regulations and rules and respecting them, such as respecting smoking ban or putting on the uniforms. Howell and Mendez (2008, p.28) consider demonstrating proper comportment for the organization such as dresses as one of the effectiveness of followers.

Class 3. Mighty arms of managers

The third class of followership prototypes involves their role as mighty arms of managers intended to "supporting the manager", "good

relationships with him", "counseling" and "being a major source of information".

Supporting manager includes diverse instances such as temporarily doing his duties, understanding manager's condition, being trustful to reduce the concerns of manager, so that the manager can count on them. Protecting the manager is a pattern that has been emerged in Carsten *et al.* (2010) study; and loyalty was an important component of followership social construction. Howell and Mendez (2008, p 28) consider characteristics like building collaborative and supportive relationships with coworkers and leader; defending and supporting leader in front of others and exerting influence on him to help leader avoid costly mistakes are necessary for good followers. Chaleff (2008, p.86) notes that followers should be committed to caring for and supporting leaders who use their power for the common good.

Consulting is the third code that includes training some points to leader, explaining the process and reporting. Carsten *et al.* (2010) stated that expressing opinions is a key indicator of followers.

Finally, the individual's role as a source of information is the latest code in the role of followers as "mighty arms of leaders". Leaders receive information from different sources. One primary source is employees. Employees, due to immediate relationship with work, can provide early and accurate information before problems change to a crisis. These findings can be complementary for Mintzberg's (1975) study on management roles. This study suggests that employees can be the best source of information about internal conditions of organization. Thody (2003) believes that one useful and important role of followers is that they can act as a filter that prevents massive and useless amounts of data from reaching the manager.

Class 4. Moral virtues

The fourth component relates to Employees behavioral and moral virtues, including "human and social relationship skills", "integrity" and "ethics". This theme refers to features that, although are not part of the functional requirements for the job, but to facilitate the work and provide an appropriate environment to work.

"Human and social relationship skills" is the first code here. Exchanging experiences with colleagues, compatibility with them, respect and courtesy were among the answers of respondents. In this component, Employees should keep calm and avoid inevitable conflicts and have good public relation skills in workplace. Sy (2010) is an anti-prototype notes to "bad tempered" and "rude" followers. Thody (2003) considers the role of followers when they keep calm, as a positive role for followers.

The next code is integrity including honesty, announcing limitations, making claims regarding disabilities and daring to say "No". Carsten *et al.* (2010) consider it as an essential feature for employees. Sy (2010) as well, in organizational citizenship prototype, found that trustworthiness is an important component of followers in a manager's view. Bennis (2008) states that if followers features could be reduced to only one, it was "honesty".

Finally ethics includes adherence to ethical principles, religion and goodwill.

Class 5. Initiation pattern

Components including "pioneering", "intellectual independence", "sense of ownership", "personal responsibility" and "personal excellence" make class 5. In this pattern, employee goes far beyond the expectations and can pass from his passive role and is responsible for changes. This pattern is consistent with third pattern of Carsten *et al.* (2010).

Pioneering includes initiation, applying responsibility, desire for freedom and suggestion. Carsten *et al.* (2010) refer to this as proactive followers. Thody (2000) believes that good follower is one with independence and ability to interpret the events independently and can begin work without being asked.

Not being "Yes people" or timid, and a clear expression of issues have been identified as intellectual independence. Intellectual independence is one of two principal dimensions of Kelley (1992) in his model. Thody (2000) also states that followers should break "quietism".

The next code in initiation pattern is having the feeling of ownership and consciences for work. The employee does not consider himself as a "means" but as an owner and works for himself.

Another code is responsibility and bailment known as reliability and accountability and is also found as an employee prototype from manager's view in Sy (2010) study.

The next code is personal excellence. Followers are willing to take more responsibility. Some consider followership as a way to be a manager in the future, they are ambitious.

Anti-prototypes of followership:

Analyzing the responses, we could explore five codes of Anti-prototype of followership which can be labeled as "role deviances" and include Destructive behaviors, Obedience, Incompetency, Indifference and Blue color. Some of these anti prototypes have been studied as bad behaviors (Griffin & Lopez, 2005) or negative organizational deviances (Appelbaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007).

Destructive behaviors

Destructive behaviors involves behaviors such as destruction of the character of colleagues or managers, false reports to exaggerate own work, treason, collusion and lobbying, flattery and deception or obstinacy with manager.

Obedience

Another anti-prototype labeled as obedience includes characteristics such as compliance, breaching the rule because of superior orders, fears of the manager and not having enough authority at work. This code is consistent with Carsten *et al.* (2010) first pattern *i.e.* "passive followers" and "conformity" of Sy (2010). (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2006) Uhl-Bien & Pillai, (2006) suggest that a corollary of the romance of leadership is subordination of followers. Romance of leadership (Meindl, 1995) is a traditional and outdated view that has influenced the leadership process and has shaped the roles of both followers and leader. Also, Kelley (1992) with the idea of "sheep" and Kellerman (2008), with "spectators" have warned towards this pattern of

followership. This finding is also complementary to theory x of McGregor (1966). Howell and Mendez (2008, p.28) when talking of non-productive behaviors of followers in interactive approach, refer to political games and explain that some followers spend their time monitoring the prevailing climate of their organization in order to adopt to it. They do exactly the commands, even if they know how it can be improved; however, they always acquit themselves with sufficient reasons.

Incompetence

Other code, incompetence, includes inexperience, carelessness, incomplete delivery of work and being under action. One anti-prototype proposed by Sy (2010) is also incompetence. Regarding the low productivity in the workplaces in Iran, this may be one of the most common problems.

Indifference

Next code presents indifference and apathy of employees to manager and organizational goals. This indifference is complementary to assumptions in pattern x (McGregor, 1967) and passive role of followers (Carsten *et al.*, 2010). Turnley and Feldman (1999) also explain 4 ways that employees show their dissatisfaction toward work: apathy and ignorance is one of them. Thody (2000) believes that considering organizational goals beyond self-interest is an essential characteristic of followers. This view is also similar with "isolated" in Kellerman theory (2008). Bennis (1993) stated that quietism, as a more pious age called the sin of silence, often costs organizations and their leaders.

Blue color

The last code i.e. Blue color, conveys inherent and natural problem of followership and includes predictable routine work, requiring a narrower view and more attention to efficiency than effectiveness in the work, and lastly less influence on others or on work.

Some examples of the quotations of participants and their relative classifications are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of quotations of respondents

Classes	Example quotations of codes
Constructive perception of work	Specialized experience that we need, the manager does not. Most managers need general knowledge about the work (Expert) We work 10 hours a day, So do not get to our personal lives. We cannot educate, exercise, pay attention to our families. We've neglected ourselves...because of my inactivity, I've been too fat. Who truly wants to work well, he must be the servant of the organization (Acceptance of poor conditions).
Job competencies	Preciseness is a necessity in my work. Because of potential dangers, we don't have the time for redundancy, so the supervisor expects us to be completely precise (Productivity at Work)
Mighty arm of the leader	Contingency order stakes place frequently, sometimes these order irritate me, but I try to keep calm that moment so that I can handle my boss in that special case(Supporting the leader) A manager can see well, but you should be a good source of information for him, you should be his eyes and ears(Source of Information)
Moral virtues	employees are first characterized by honesty... honesty makes employee to monitor the situation realistically and report it honestly for upper levels…some people just show to be good in reports. Their performance is flashy….(Integrity) My religious beliefs are high... I think it's much better that some religious beliefs will be strengthened, so employees work well because of consciousness…I'm more committed to religious beliefs than fear of the boss(Morality).
Initiation	A good characteristic [of a follower] is doing what is not his duty. For example, one of our colleagues who is good at English translated catalogs from English, into Persian. We all have used them, well; it was not part of their duties at all (Pioneering). The abilities of employees are not used enough in our organization...for example managers don't want to give employees the opportunity to be managers (Personal excellence)
Role deviance	A negative characteristics in some employees is gossip and backbiting…Demagogy also exists, which means you do not work perfectly but pretend that you are,...another problem here is flattering. Some employees want to make progress quickly…(Destructive behaviors) Being "yes people" is a poison and turns employee to be banal. The supervisor is not my warden, so that I always tell him "yes sir"!(Obedience)

Discussion

Prototypes and anti-prototypes of followers in IFTs was revealed through content analysis. Reflecting on emerging codes and classes, researchers reached a new pattern with five dimensions; each conveys one part of the follower's roles in workplace and includes both the

prototypes and anti-prototypes of the follower. Since prototypes are categorized into five classes and anti-prototypes are categorized into just one class, researchers had to consider each class of prototype in contrast to a class of anti-prototype. By each "orientation", authors do not mean that the concepts are exactly equivalent, but they try to summarize findings and relate prototypes and anti-prototypes.

Table 3. Five orientations of followers with respective prototypes and anti-prototypes

Direction	Prototypes	Anti- prototypes
Perception of work	Constructive perception of work	Blue color
Professional ability	Job competencies	Incompetency
Behavior and moralities	Virtues and moralities	Destructive behaviors
Relationship with manager	Mighty arm of the leader	Indifference
Overall approach	Initiation pattern	Obedience

The first direction presents follower's relationship with his work and his attitudes toward it. An employee may know his work as productive, demanding and challenging, or may have a negative view as a blue color, involving limited perspective and responsibility, predictable and routine.

The second direction shows follower's attitudes toward professional ability: he might have enough job qualifications to meet the standards or above, or may find himself incompetent and unable to do the job.

The third direction relates to follower's behavior and moralities. A follower may be honest and affable with good social relations or may show destructive behaviors including the destruction of other people's character, collusion and lobbying, flattery, treachery, theft or deception.

The fourth direction relates to the relationship between leaders and followers. Sometimes a follower is as mighty as the arm of a leader, he provides accurate and timely information for him, supports and respects him; or he can be indifferent and create ground work for gradual destruction of the leader.

The last orientation is follower's general approach to his role model that can be an initiation approach; or blind compliance, obedience and subordination. This pattern suggests whether follower accepts his role as a traditional, conservative, routine position, or as a mature human

with dignity. Does he consider his relationship with the manager as an upstream/inferiority one, or as a member of a team who must take responsibility and make a condition for collective improvement? There are a number of factors that cause followers to consider his role as a followership role. Role orientation of an individual represents how he conceptualizes his responsibilities and duties in organizational status (Howell & Mendez, 2008, p.29). The mentioned orientations are an important contribution of this study.

This study involves important contributions for IFTs and followership prototypes and anti-prototypes. Many features coming out of this study has not been found in similar researches, like focusing on follower's relationship with leader and followership role deviances. Although few features were mentioned in similar studies but were not significant for participants in the present study, including having a positive attitude and demonstrating loyalty to the organization as in Carsten *et al.* (2010), enthusiasm and insubordination (Sy, 2010). Due to unemployment and job insecurities in Iran, it seems that leaving an organization is not a concern for employees and managers. Enthusiasm and having positive attitudes also look unimportant and even luxury.

In the present study, IFTs of followers were analyzed and five patterns of prototypes and five codes of anti-prototypes were identified. Still, lack of a common questionnaire for identifying followers is evident (Gils *et al.*, 2010). Future studies can test the results of this study for developing a questionnaire. The results discussed earlier in some cases were different from results of similar researches in other cultural contexts. Future studies can pay attention to these differences to determine which cultural or organizational dimensions are related with them.

Researchers studied implicit theories of followers as subordinates and did not make any difference between clerks and professional. As Friedson in 1970s and 1980s (Brint, 1993) suggests, professionals have special characteristics such as more power and control on work, which distinguish them from nonprofessionals, i.e. Clerks. Findings here do not denote professional and nonprofessional followership

theories. Questionnaires coming out of such studies can characterize what different groups of followers emphasize on.

This study only investigated follower's IFTs, but as Howell and Mendez (2008, p.26) pointed out, followers self-concept (followers view about themselves) is just one of the factors that influence their behavior, and two other components *i.e.* leaders' expectations and organizational factors also play a role in this field. Therefore, this factor alone cannot predict their behavior; this actually defines the scope of application of this research.

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کشف نظریه‌های ضمنی پیروی پیروان با استفاده از رویکرد کیفی در سازمان‌های بزرگ شهر مشهد

زهرا محمدزاده*۱، سعید مرتضوی۲، محمد لگزیان۲، فریبرز رحیم‌نیا۲

۱. دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد و مؤسسه آموزش عالی بینالود، مشهد، ایران

۲. دانشکدهٔ علوم اداری و اقتصاد، دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد، مشهد، ایران

چکیده

پیروی پارادایم رو به رشدی در رفتار سازمانی به شمار می‌رود که به جای تمرکز صرف بر رهبری، پیروان را کانون توجه خود قرارمی‌دهد. کشف دیدگاه‌های پیروان به نقش خودشان که با عنوان نظریه‌های ضمنی پیروی پیروان شناخته می‌شود، هدف مقاله است. برای این منظور براساس رویکرد پدیدارشناسی، مصاحبه‌هایی نیمه‌ساختاریافته با کارکنانی از صنایع مختلف سازمان‌های بزرگ دولتی و خصوصی شهر مشهد انجام و با روش تحلیل محتوا تجزیه و تحلیل شد. ۲۵ طبقه نظریه‌های ضمنی شناسایی شد که در پنج دستهٔ ویژگی‌های مثبت و پنج دستهٔ ویژگی‌های منفی قرارمی‌گیرد. مؤلفه‌های مثبت پیروی با عنوان ادراک سازنده از کار، شایستگی شغلی، بازوی توانای رهبر، فضایل اخلاقی و الگوی پیشگامی طبقه‌بندی شد. پنج مؤلفهٔ ویژگی‌های منفی نیز با عنوان نابهنجاری‌های نقش نامگذاری شد و شامل تخریب، تابعیت، بی‌کفایتی، بی‌تفاوتی و کاربدی بود. با تأمل در نتایج، می‌توان الگویی با پنج جهت‌گیری شناسایی کرد که هر بعد دارای وجه مثبت و وجه منفی است. به عبارت دیگر، برای هر بعد شناسایی شده، هم می‌توان الگوی پیروی خوب و هم الگوهای پیروی نامناسب تبیین کرد.

کلیدواژگان

پیروان، پیروی، تحلیل محتوا، نظریه‌های ضمنی.

* نویسنده مسئول، رایانامه: Zmohamadzadeh@yahoo.com